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AUTHOR	Oltman, Philip K.; Hartnett, Rodney T.
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ABSTRACT

To learn more about graduate program selectivity, admission test requirements, and the role that the Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) play in the admission process, a two-phase study was conducted. First, the GRE General Test and Subject Test requirements of a broad range (over 12,000) of graduate programs were summarized by examining data in the "Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual" to indicate how many and what kinds of programs do or do not require GRE scores. Then a mail survey of 616 graduate departments was carried out; the survey yielded 333 replies to a questionnaire about administrator's perceptions of the importance of GRE scores in the admissions process and the ways in which scores were used. Faculty members responding to the questionnaire included professors (56%), associate professors (29%), and assistant professors or below (15%). The following conclusions were reached: (1) about 64% of all graduate programs require GRE scores; (2) GRE score requirements have not changed appreciably over the last decade; (3) there is little relationship between program selectivity and use of GRE scores; (4) the primary use of GRE scores appears to be to compensate for otherwise weak applicant credentials; (5) the primary reason given for non-use of GRE scores is the belief that other information is adequate for decisions; and (6) departments assign the most importance to grades, followed by letters of recommendation, and then by GRE scores. Nine tables and 1 graph present study data. The survey, the departmental questionnaire, and a sample of responses are appended. (Author/SLD)

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GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS

THE ROLE OF GRE GENERAL AND SUBJECT TEST SCORES IN GRADUATE PROGRAM ADMISSION

Philip K. Oltman
and
Rodney T. Hartnett

GRE Board Research Report GREB No. 81-8R
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EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE, PRINCETON, NJ

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Abstract

To learn more about graduate program selectivity, admission test requirements, and the role the Graduate Record Examinations play in the admission process, a two-phase study was carried out. First, the GRE® General Test and/or Subject Test requirements of a broad range of graduate programs were summarized by examining data in two issues of the Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual. Analyses of these data indicated how many and what kinds of graduate programs do and do not require or recommend GRE test scores. Second, a mail survey of graduate programs was carried out in order to determine their perceptions of the role test scores play in the admission process and to obtain specific information about how they use test score information. The same questionnaire (with appropriate branching instructions) was used to learn why certain programs do not require or recommend GRE scores. The following conclusions were reached:

1. While variations exist across disciplines, approximately 64 percent of all graduate programs require or recommend submission of GRE scores.

2. GRE test score requirements have not changed appreciably over the last decade.

3. There is little relationship between program selectivity and use of GRE scores.

4. The primary use of GRE scores appears to be to compensate for otherwise weak applicant credentials.

5. The primary reason given for not using GRE scores is that the departments feel that other data provide an adequate basis for admission decisions.

6. Graduate departments assign the most importance to undergraduate grades in making admission decisions, followed by letters of recommendation and by GRE scores, with other criteria rated progressively less important.

Introduction

It is well known that practically all young people aspiring to college take at least one of the two major college admission tests, a phenomenon explained by the fact that most four-year institutions require prospective students to submit test score information with their applications (Hartnett & Feldmesser, 1980). In addition, much has been written about how these tests are used in making admission decisions at institutions characterized by competitive admissions (Moll, 1979) as well as at the less selective ones (Rever, 1978). And, to add to our empirical base, the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board in 1980 conducted a national survey of admission test requirements and uses.

At the graduate level, however, less information has been available about either admission test requirements or use. (In this report we use the term 'graduate' to refer to the traditional academic disciplines and not to other postbaccalaureate and professional programs such as law, medicine, and business.) Information regarding graduate program test requirements has been collected, but the data usually have been reported in formats and sources (for example, graduate program guides and directories) that do not improve our understanding of graduate admission test requirements on a national level. Similarly, some research has been done on the question of test use at the graduate level, but it has generally dealt with single disciplines at single institutions (for example, Goldberg, 1977). Updating and extending our understanding of GRE score requirements and uses is important if the GRE Board is to plan to meet the needs of America's graduate institutions in the 1980s.

The present study was undertaken to better our understanding of how the GRE program is achieving its intended purposes. Toward this end, we sought to answer three general questions about the role of GRE test scores in the graduate school admission process: (1) How many and what types of graduate programs require or recommend that their applicants for admission submit scores on one or more of the Graduate Record Examinations? (2) For programs that do require or recommend the test scores, how, and for what purposes, are they used, and how important do their users judge them to be in the admission process? and (3) For programs that do not require or recommend the test scores, what reasons do they give for their policy?

Perceived Importance of GRE Test Scores

In some institutions, GRE requirements are established in the office of the dean of the graduate school. It may be that, in some such institutions, the appropriate people at the department or program level would prefer not to require the scores for all applicants, but are obliged to do so by overall graduate school policy. Thus it cannot be assumed that requiring GRE scores is a necessary indication that the program regards them as important or useful.

Previous research has been conducted on the question of the importance admission tests have in admission decisions, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. At the undergraduate level, a study conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers and the College Board (1980) found that aptitude test scores (SAT, ACT, and the like) were rated as being the single most important factor in admission decisions by only 2 percent of the 449 colleges in their study, but were rated as being either the single most important factor or a very important factor by nearly two-thirds of the four-year institutions responding to their survey. Achievement test scores, on the other hand, were given very important ratings by only 5 percent of the respondents. At the graduate level, Burns (1970) found that only 17 percent of the graduate deans responding to his survey reported that GRE General Test scores were "highly important" in admission decisions at their institutions. In contrast, the college transcript was rated as being highly important by more than three-fourths of the deans.

Information about How Admission Test Scores Are Used

The admission decision is often an extremely complicated process, and it was recognized that it would not be possible to capture the intricate subtleties by means of a brief questionnaire. Some programs, but surely only a very few, do use admission test scores in uniform ways for all applicants, as in using regression formulas to calculate some index of expected academic attainment. For such programs, explaining how they use admission test scores was not expected to be overly difficult. For the majority of programs, however, the role that each of the various selection factors plays in reaching an admission decision is probably not nearly so straightforward. For one thing, the test score information may be used in different ways for different applicants or, at least, different groups of applicants. Test scores may be judged differently for international applicants than for U. S. citizens or for students seeking fellowship or other financial aid assistance than for those who are not. Still, in spite of the obvious difficulty of doing so, it was deemed important and useful to attempt to gain some reasonably systematic reading of the ways that test score information is used in the selection of graduate students.

Programs That Do Not Require or Recommend GRE Scores

In addition to programs that require or recommend GRE scores, we also surveyed a sample of programs that do not require or recommend the scores. We were able, thereby, to explore certain program characteristics that might differentiate those that do and those that do not require or recommend the scores and to elicit some of the possible reasons departments give for not using them.

Data to answer questions about GRE score requirements were available from the Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual (now known as the Directory of Graduate Programs). Data relevant to the questions about GRE score use were gathered by means of a questionnaire mailed to the chairpersons of programs in eight academic disciplines. Finally, information regarding program quality ratings was obtained from the American Council on Education (Roose & Andersen, 1970), and from Jones, Lindzey, and Coggeshall (1982).

Procedure, Test Score Requirements

The Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual includes descriptive information about various aspects of the degree programs at most graduate-degree-granting institutions in the country. The specific number of degree programs and institutions included varies from one issue of the Manual to another, depending on the rate of response received from institutions to the forms used to collect the information. The 1981-1983 issue of the Manual, the data source used in this part of the study, contains information about graduate programs in 84 major fields collected from 741 institutions. These institutions and programs represent more than 95 percent of all graduate students enrolled in member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools. The following information is included in the Manual: highest degree offered, graduate degrees awarded during a recent three-year period, number of faculty members and students, departmental prerequisites (that is, whether preadmission variables such as GRE test scores and references are required or recommended), and availability of financial aid.

Answers to questions about changes in graduate program test score requirements were found by comparing information in the 1981-1983 edition with information published in the 1972 Manual for the same sample of programs.

A determination of whether test score requirements varied according to discipline and certain other program characteristics (for example, highest degree awarded, prestige) was made by sorting programs into categories on these characteristics (for example, offering master's only vs. offering doctorate) and comparing the test score requirement information across categories.

Most of the information necessary for these analyses was available on the Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual data tapes. One set of information that was added was reputational ratings data (Roose & Andersen, 1970), which were obtained from the American Council on Education. Though these ratings were made about 14 years ago, peer reputational ratings have been found to be extremely stable over time (Hartnett, Clark, & Baird, 1978). The ACE data were available only for doctoral programs that granted a number of doctorates exceeding a specified minimum, and therefore only a subset of the programs with entries in the Manual were included in this analysis. This part of the analysis was completed before the Jones et al. (1982) ratings became available.

Our interest was in program practices with regard to GRE scores. The forms used to collect data for the 1981-1983 Manual asked about program requirements with respect to both the GRE General Test and Subject Tests, requesting respondents to indicate whether each test was required, recommended, required or recommended for certain programs, or neither required nor recommended. They were not asked which Subject Test was used, but only whether a Subject Test was used. Instructions for the data collection forms for the 1972 Manual were slightly different, asking respondents to indicate which one of three practices was followed by their program, that is, whether the tests were required, recommended, or neither required nor recommended. Thus, the 1972 form did not allow for respondents to indicate that one or both tests might be required or recommended only for certain programs.

Results, Test Score Requirements

Current Practices

Data from the 1981-1983 Manual relevant to current program practices with regard to GRE scores are summarized in Tables 1 through 4. As indicated in Table 1, more than half of the more than 7,000 programs that offer the master's as the highest degree either require or recommend applicants to submit GRE General Test scores, and more than three-fourths of the nearly 5,500 programs offering a doctoral degree have a similar practice. A smaller percentage of programs, at both the master's and doctoral levels, require or recommend a GRE Subject Test score. Just over 20 percent of the programs offering a master's as their highest degree either require or recommend a Subject Test score, and 44 percent of those offering a doctoral degree require or recommend a Subject Test score. As shown in this and subsequent tables, a substantial percentage of respondents left this item blank (see last column of Table 1). It is probably safe to assume that the great majority of respondents leaving the item blank represent programs that do not require or recommend the GRE test score in question; nonresponse data will be interpreted accordingly in these tables.

Whether graduate programs require or recommend applicants to submit scores on one or more of the GRE tests varies a great deal across academic areas and even varies substantially across specific disciplines within areas, as indicated by the data reported in Tables 2 and 3. Across major areas, the percentage of programs that require or recommend GRE General Test scores ranges from nearly 82 percent in the biological sciences to 52 percent in the fine and applied arts. Within these area groupings, however, the variation in test requirement practices is even more dramatic. The range in percentage of programs requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores exceeds 30 percentage points in 4 of the 11 area groupings: the biological sciences (a 35 percentage point range between zoology and environmental studies), the health sciences (a 38 percentage point range between basic medical science and gerontology), the humanities (a 44 percentage point range between philosophy and humanities and liberal studies), and the social sciences (a 63 percentage point range between economics and business and management). The latter range is probably due to the wide use of the Graduate Management Admission Test in business and management programs.

The percentage of programs that require applicants to submit Subject Test scores ranges from almost 60 percent in the physical sciences to less than 13 percent in home economics (see Table 3). As was the case with the General Test, the range across disciplines within the area groupings is considerable. Of the 11 area groupings, the range in percentage points of programs requiring or recommending a Subject Test score exceeds 30 points in 5: the biological sciences (a 57 percentage point range between zoology and environmental studies), the health sciences (a 59 percentage point range between basic medical science and gerontology), the humanities (a 52 percentage point range between romance languages and religion), the physical sciences (a 47 percentage point range between biochemistry and general science and technology), and the social sciences (a 46 percentage point range between economics and social work). As indicated in Table 3, fields least likely to require or recommend a Subject Test score are ones for which no clearly appropriate Subject Test is available (for example, gerontology, fine arts, and social work).

GRE score requirement practices do not seem to be related strongly to reputational ratings of program quality. Data pertaining to this question are presented in Table 4. Reputational ratings were available only for doctoral programs and were taken from the 1969 American Council on Education study of doctoral program quality (Roose & Andersen, 1970). Across all doctoral programs included in the Manual (more than 5,000 of them), there was a very slight tendency for programs with higher reputational ratings to require or recommend GRE General Test scores (see first column of Table 4). Of those programs with "distinguished" ratings, 88 percent required or recommended GRE General Test scores, whereas 73 percent of the programs with "marginal" quality ratings required or recommended the scores. When the relationship

between test requirements and reputation is examined separately by discipline, however, the association weakens. In each of the five fields for which quality ratings data were available (biological sciences, humanities, physical sciences, engineering, and social sciences), a higher percentage of programs with "distinguished" ratings required or recommended GRE General Test scores than did programs with "marginal" ratings. However, between these two rating extremes, that is, for programs rated "strong," "good," or "adequate," there was no consistent monotonic relationship. Thus, beyond the observation that the very best doctoral programs (insofar as the ACE ratings are a valid measure of quality) tend to require GRE scores more often than the least respected ones, not much can be said about program quality and test requirements.

Changes in Practices

Overall, graduate program practices with respect to GRE test requirements have not changed much over the past decade. Data relevant to change are presented in Table 5. Among all the graduate programs analyzed, regardless of degree offering or discipline, the percent requiring or recommending applicants to submit GRE General Test scores was virtually the same in 1981 (64 percent) as in 1972 (65 percent) and the percent requiring or recommending a Subject Test score was down by 8 percent. Among programs for which the master's is the highest degree awarded, there was a drop of 6 percentage points in the number of programs that required or recommended GRE General Test scores in 1981 compared to 1972, and a drop of nearly 10 percentage points in programs that required or recommended a Subject Test score. Among programs that offer the doctorate, however, there was an 8 percentage point increase in the number of programs that required or recommended GRE General Test scores in 1981, and a drop of only 3 percentage points in programs that required or recommended a Subject Test score.

Just as there was substantial variation in 1981 practices across the various disciplines and major field areas, there was also considerable variation in the amount of change over the 10 year period. For the General Test, for example, the changes between 1972 and 1981 ranged from a 14 percentage point increase in agriculture to a 9 percentage point decrease in the social sciences. (The social sciences include business and management, an area which, as noted earlier, uses the Graduate Management Admission Test). Of the nine discipline groups that existed in both 1972 and 1981, the percentage of programs requiring or recommending General Test scores increased in six and decreased in three. However, the total change was essentially nil because the social sciences and education have the largest number of programs.

For the Subject Tests, on the other hand, there was a decrease in the percentage of programs requiring or recommending the test scores in six areas and an increase in three areas. Again, the

largest single decrease occurred in the social sciences, where a drop of 16 percentage points occurred for programs that required or recommended a Subject Test score in 1981.

A comparison of the 1972 and 1981 General Test score requirements was made for each of the 64 specific disciplines for which both 1972 and 1981 requirement data were available. A number of disciplines, including architecture and planning, electrical engineering, music, and several others, had the same percentage of programs requiring or recommending General Test scores in 1981 as in 1972. In spite of the finding reported in Table 5 that there was an overall slight decrease in the percentage of programs requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores between 1972 and 1981, the number of disciplines that had a higher percentage of programs requiring or recommending General Test scores in 1981 was much greater than the number of disciplines that had a lower percentage in 1981. Horticulture, agronomy, microbiology and bacteriology, pharmacy, and entomology witnessed the most dramatic increase in General Test score requirements, in each case representing an approximately 20 percentage point increase during the 10-year period. The single greatest decrease was found for business and management, in which only 20 percent of the programs required or recommended General Test scores in 1981 compared to 46 percent in 1972. This decrease can probably be explained largely by the emergence of the Graduate Management Admission Test during this same period. Other disciplines that experienced decreases were largely in the areas of the fine arts, social sciences, and education, confirming the data already reported in Table 5.

Procedure, GRE Score Use Survey

Information about how GRE scores are used was obtained by means of a mail survey of a sample of graduate departments. The survey sought information about several aspects of the admission process, including the perceived importance of test score information, how test score information is used in making judgments about applicants, and departmental or program selectivity. As in any survey, we are dealing with self-reports and not observed actions, and interpretations of the data must be made with that in mind.

Disciplines

The survey was limited to a selection of disciplines in each of the four broad areas of the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and education as follows: in the natural sciences, chemistry, mathematics, and computer science; in the social sciences, psychology and economics; in the humanities, English and music; and several subspecialties of education. These disciplines are among the most "popular," in that collectively they represent disciplines chosen as the intended graduate major by the bulk of the GRE test-taking population (Altman & Holland, 1977; Wild, 1979).

Nature of the Survey

The questionnaire was designed for completion by the program chairperson or an individual within the program who was knowledgeable about the graduate student admission process. It was intended to be completed with reference to the admission policies and practices of either the department as a whole (for example, psychology, chemistry) or those of a subspecialty (program) within the department (for example, clinical psychology, physical chemistry).

Sample

It seemed desirable for the sample to contain both master's and doctoral programs, to contain both small and large departments, and to include departments that required GRE scores as well as those that merely recommended them and those that neither required nor recommended them.

Within each of the eight disciplines, a sample was drawn such that:

1. Approximately half were large departments and half were small departments. Size was defined by ranking the departments within disciplines in order of the number of candidates receiving their highest degree within the last three years and dividing at the median. An output of degrees above the median defined a department as large; an output of degrees below the median defined a department as small.

2. Approximately half offered the master's as their highest degree and half offered the doctorate.

3. Approximately one-third required GRE General Test scores, one-third either recommended them or required or recommended them for some candidates, and one-third neither required nor recommended the test scores.

The sampling criteria were available in the 1981-1983 Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual. The target total sample size was 84 departments in each discipline, with 7 in each cell of the plan defined by the 12 possible combinations of size, highest degree, and GRE requirement. Obviously these targets could not be met exactly, but random samples were drawn, subject to the above restrictions, that fairly well approximated them. The resulting sample is shown in Table 6.

Addresses were obtained from the Manual and questionnaires dealing with admission practices were sent to each of 616 departments. Departments not responding within three weeks were sent a follow-up letter asking them if they had already returned the questionnaire, if they had not and wanted another so they could

respond, or whether they did not wish to participate. The final yield of returned and usable questionnaires was 333, or slightly over half, which is in the expectable range for surveys of this type. A complete accounting of the questionnaire mailing is shown in Table 7, including returned usable questionnaires, responses to the follow-up that did not result in returned questionnaires, and nonresponses.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is reproduced in Appendix A. It was designed to elicit some descriptive information about the respondents and their departments, to inquire into admission policies, to ask for ratings of the relative importance of various admission criteria, to elicit reasons for not requiring GRE scores where that was the policy, and to gather information on various other issues of interest.

Survey Results

Respondents

Faculty members responding to the questionnaire were at the rank of professor (56 percent), associate professor (29 percent), or assistant professor or below (15 percent).

Departments

Although departments were sampled using Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual data to try to achieve approximately equal representation of master's and doctoral programs, a questionnaire item asked for this information so that respondents' departments could be characterized with the most current information. The master's degree was the highest degree offered in 41 percent of responding departments, while 57 percent offered the doctorate.

The questionnaire also contained items dealing with departmental policy regarding the GRE tests, again to verify and make most current the information on test policy. Of the total sample of 333 respondents, 45 percent reported that they required GRE General Test scores, 14 percent recommended them, 14 percent required or recommended them for certain degree applicants, and 24 percent neither required nor recommended them. Thus, the responding sample contains rather more GRE-requiring departments than was intended in the plan.

Although use of GRE Subject Test scores was not part of the sampling plan, this information was obtained on the questionnaire. A GRE Subject Test score was reported to be required by 17 percent of the departments, to be recommended by 16 percent, required or recommended for some degree applicants by 11 percent, and neither

required nor recommended by 53 percent of the departments. It is interesting to note that Subject Test scores were almost never required unless General Test scores were also required.

Regarding the size of responding departments, analysis of the Manual data indicated that almost exactly half the departments were above the median of their discipline in number of degrees granted in the last three years, and half were below the median.

Admission Policy

Respondents were asked in Question 4 to describe their admission policy for degree candidates by placing it in the one of five categories they thought best described it. The percentages of respondents endorsing each category were:

6% Essentially "open door"

36% Somewhat competitive (usual standards for undergraduate grades and test scores waived in some cases)

44% Moderately competitive; strong credentials required

9% Very competitive; some strong candidates rejected

3% Extremely competitive; only exceptional candidates accepted

(The percentages do not add to 100 because of nonresponse and rounding error.)

Admission Criteria

Question 5 listed a number of possible criteria that could be used by committees in their deliberations. Respondents were asked to rate each of these criteria on a scale from 1 ("not used") through 5 ("extremely important"). The mean importance ratings for each of the criteria were computed, and these are listed in Table 8 for the subgroup of 151 that reported that they required GRE General Test scores and the subgroup of 80 that reported neither requiring nor recommending them. The criteria are listed in order of rated importance for the group requiring the test scores. Note that with the exception of the rated importance of the test scores themselves, the two groups' relative ratings are quite similar. Undergraduate grades and recommendations were rated most important, with GRE verbal and quantitative scores falling near the middle of the list. GRE analytical scores, GRE Subject Test scores, and other test scores (including TOEFL and the Miller Analogies Test) came lowest on the list.

It seemed obvious a priori that respondents who required GRE General Test scores would rate them as being more important than would those neither requiring nor recommending the scores. Beyond that, however, it also seemed possible that the rank order of importance of the other various criteria could also differ between such groups. If requiring or not requiring GRE General Test scores indicates a basic difference in admissions philosophy, then departments that use and do not use the test scores might have had very different rankings of other criteria as well. That they did not can be graphically seen in Figure 1, where the means from Table 8 are plotted. The mean importance ratings for those requiring the scores and for those neither requiring nor recommending them are shown plotted for each of the 21 items in Figure 1, with the ratings made by departments requiring the scores on the ordinate and those by departments neither requiring nor recommending the scores on the abscissa. The letters V, Q, and A represent the plots of the pairs of ratings of the GRE General Test verbal, quantitative, and analytical scores; the plotted pairs of ratings of the remaining 18 items are indicated by asterisks. The figure makes clear that, with the exception of the GRE General Test scores, the extent of agreement on the relative importance of the 18 remaining admissions criteria was extremely high. In fact, the correlation between the mean importance ratings for the two subgroups across the 18 criteria was .95.

It appears, therefore, that departments requiring GRE General Test scores and those neither requiring nor recommending them do not differ in their perceptions of the importance of a wide variety of other admission criteria. With the exception of their view of the GRE, they do not seem to be different populations.

Special Populations

Question 6 dealt with possible differences in weighting of various admission criteria for several groups of applicants. Changes in weighting for foreign applicants were reported by 35 percent (usually involving heavy weighting of the Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL]), for ethnic minority applicants by 12 percent, for older applicants by 3 percent, for women applicants by 2 percent, and for handicapped applicants by 2 percent. In response to Question 9, 8 percent of the respondents reported that they had a formal policy regarding admission decisions for handicapped students, with many of these being explained as policies of nondiscrimination. That is, the 8 percent includes respondents asserting that they have no different policy for the handicapped. Finally, in Question 11, 6 percent of the respondents stated that they would treat GRE scores differently if the test had been administered under special conditions because of an applicant's handicap.

Use of GRE Scores in Admission

Question 12 dealt with policies on the use of GRE scores in the admission process. Seven alternative policies were presented, along with an opportunity for written comments. Table 9 displays the percentage endorsements of each of the alternatives for the 151 departments requiring GRE General Test scores and the 82 departments either recommending the scores or requiring or recommending them for some applicants. Note that respondents were asked to select the one statement that best described their way of using the GRE scores. The statements are arranged in Table 9 in descending order, based on the percentage of endorsement by the group requiring the scores.

The most frequent use of GRE scores appears to be as a compensation for otherwise less than satisfactory credentials. Departments apparently use test scores to avoid "false negative" errors, that is, to avoid mistakenly rejecting applicants who might be qualified but who have so far not accumulated a strong supporting record of accomplishment. This was particularly true of recommending departments. The scores are also frequently used as minimum cutoffs. It should be noted here that the GRE Board's Guidelines for the Use of GRE Scores in effect at the time of the survey indicated that cautious use of cutoff scores was acceptable. The current Guidelines advise against such use. Statistical prediction formulas are apparently rarely used, as are approximations to them based on point assignment schemes.

The added comments in response to Question 12 are reproduced in Appendix B, sorted by respondents' GRE General Test score requirements (based on Question 7), and within that by response to the alternatives provided in Question 12. These comments were primarily clarifications or qualifications of the respondents' choice of answer for Question 12. For example, a department's "fixed" cutoff scores can be waived in some cases. Or, when using scores to categorize applicants, those requesting financial aid may be categorized differently from those not requesting aid. Or, scores may be especially used as compensating factors in the case of international applicants. For the most part, the comments were generally consistent with the information contained in the response alternatives provided.

Use of GRE Test Scores for Other Purposes

Beyond their use in admission, a number of departments reported nonadmission uses to which the scores were put. Among those departments requiring GRE General Test scores, they were reported to be used for academic advising by 25 percent, for awarding assistantships and fellowships by 50 percent, for placement of students in review courses by 7 percent, and as a requirement for graduation by 1 percent. Among departments recommending or requiring or recommending the test scores for some

applicants, 12 percent used them for academic advising, 46 percent used them for awarding assistantships and fellowships, 5 percent used them for placement of students in review courses, and none used them for a graduation requirement.

Among those departments requiring GRE Subject Test scores, 33 percent reported using them for academic advising, 37 percent for awarding assistantships and fellowships, 16 percent for placement in review courses, and 9 percent as departmental comprehensive examinations or other requirements for graduation. For departments recommending or requiring or recommending Subject Test scores for some applicants, 14 percent used them for academic advising, 47 percent for awarding assistantships and fellowships, 11 percent for placement of students in review courses, and 1 percent as a requirement for graduation.

Use of the GRE Guidelines

The guidelines for score use established by the GRE Board were not reported to be adhered to by a particularly large percentage of respondents' departments. In response to Question 14, the guidelines were reported to be followed in their admission practices by only 10 percent of the departments. Another 37 percent stated that they were familiar with the guidelines but did not incorporate them in their admission policy. The remainder either stated that they did not use the guidelines or did not respond to the question.

Test Score Requirement and Department Quality

In what ways are departments that require GRE scores different from those that do not? With the exception of their views of the scores themselves, they do not differ in their rankings of a number of potential admission criteria. Is requirement of the GRE scores related to some aspect of department quality? Our earlier analysis based on the Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual files suggests not, but we can examine the questionnaire data as well.

Self-ratings of selectivity. We do not have available any direct measure of selectivity. We did, however, ask departments to rate themselves on selectivity (Question 4) on a 1 to 5 scale running from "essentially 'open door'" through "extremely competitive; only exceptional candidates accepted." There was no correlation between score use policy (required, recommended, required or recommended for certain candidates, and neither required nor recommended) and self-ratings of selectivity. Self-ratings averaged somewhere between "somewhat..." and "moderately..." competitive for each group of departments.

Quality ratings. Department quality ratings were available from the report by Jones et al. (1982) for 112 of the 189 doctoral programs in our sample. The Jones et al. report did not include

education departments, of which we had 28 in our sample. We found no correlation between departmental quality ratings and policy regarding GRE score requirements. These findings are consistent with those reported earlier in this report using Manual data and the Roose and Andersen (1970) quality ratings.

Reasons for Not Requiring or Recommending GRE Test Scores

For the 24 percent (N=80) of the responding departments reporting that they neither require nor recommend GRE General Test scores, a section of the questionnaire permitted them to indicate the importance of each of a series of possible reasons for their policy (Question 16). Of the eight listed possible reasons, the one that stood out as being of highest judged importance was: "GRE test scores are not necessary; the other information we obtain is sufficient to make accurate decisions." This item was judged a "very important" reason for not using the GRE by 57 percent of these respondents; the next reason most frequently endorsed as "very important" was so endorsed by only 18 percent of respondents: "GRE scores do not predict performance in our program.

A free response opportunity was provided as Question 16i. Although 25 respondents wrote something for this item, only a few of the responses were informative (the complete list is presented as Appendix C). Four respondents complained about delays in receiving scores or limited numbers of scheduled test dates. One noted that their applicants were older and they thus questioned the validity of GRE scores for their applicant group. Other remarks were either amplifications of responses made to the other items in this group or comments about the particular department.

Discussion

The analyses of the Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual data showed that the GRE General and Subject Test scores are used rather widely, but that there is still a sizable fraction of the population of departments that does not require them. Over the last 10 years, the rate of use of GRE scores has increased for some disciplines and decreased for others. Across all departments, the overall rate has remained steady at just over 64 percent.

There is often a great deal of variability in test score requirements within a single institution. In a 1970 survey of the graduate deans of all member institutions of the Council of Graduate Schools, Lannholm (1971) found that only 58 institutions (or approximately 20 percent of the 288 institutions that responded to the questionnaire) had a graduate-school-wide policy requiring GRE General Test scores of all applicants. Only 30 institutions in the same study reported a graduate-school-wide policy requiring scores on both the GRE General Test and a GRE Subject Test of all applicants.

In our survey, test score information was ranked below undergraduate performance and recommendations in terms of its importance in the admission process. These results are generally consistent with those reported by Lannholm (1968) and Burns (1970), who found that undergraduate scholastic performance was considered the key criterion for admission.

The departments in the sample responding to our survey rated themselves as mainly between "somewhat" and "moderately" competitive (80 percent fell in that range). This would suggest that most departments are not interested so much in extensive "weeding out" of applicants, as in making certain that qualified applicants do not get eliminated unnecessarily. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the most common admission use for GRE General Test scores was as a compensation for otherwise weak credentials. In other words, the scores apparently help avoid "false negative" errors for many departments. By far the most common nonadmission use of GRE scores was in the process of awarding financial aid. In some departments, the scores were not used at all in admission, but were used for aid decisions, in which the departments apparently feel obliged to be more selective. There are indeed many more places in graduate departments than there are fellowships and assistantships, and even a relatively unselective department must be selective when awarding financial support.

Why are GRE scores not used by many departments? Various reasons were given by respondents, but the reason most often endorsed, by a wide margin, was simply the opinion that the department was already doing an adequate job of selecting students and that the scores would not add significantly to the admission process in their departments. Departments not requiring the scores were not of lesser quality, as might have been expected. Nor did they differ greatly from other departments in their perceptions of the relative importance of a wide variety of admission criteria. They simply did not see the scores as contributing added useful information to their deliberations. Further study of differences between admission deliberations with and without the benefit of GRE test scores would help us to understand the differing perceptions of the usefulness of these scores.

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Table 1

GRE Test Requirements in 1981 by Highest Degree Offered
(in percents)

Test and Program	Require	Recommend	Require or Recommend for Certain Programs	Do Not Require or Recommend	Blank
General Test					
Master's (N=7185)[a]	46.7	9.5	9.0	13.4	21.4
Doctorate (N=5491)	63.1	12.3	12.3	4.3	7.9
Other (N=400)	47.5	8.8	8.5	16.3	19.0
Blank (N=108)	33.3	15.7	1.9	25.9	23.1
Subject Test					
Master's (N=7185)	10.9	10.2	5.8	25.2	47.9
Doctorate (N=5491)	23.8	20.6	12.5	12.2	30.9
Other (N=400)	12.0	8.0	6.8	26.3	47.0
Blank (N=108)	6.5	9.3	1.9	43.5	38.9

[a]In this and all subsequent tables, N refers to number of programs.

Table 2

Percentage of Programs That Either Required or Recommended the GRE General Test in 1981, by Discipline

Discipline	Mean	Range	
		High	Low
Biological Sciences (N=1287)	81.8	90.8 (Zoology)	55.8 (Environmental Studies)
Physical Sciences (N=990)	78.5	86.0 (Biochemistry)	60.7 (General Science & Technology)
Humanities (N=1654)	70.0	82.7 (Philosophy)	38.5 (Humanities & Liberal Studies)
Agriculture (N=335)	68.3	76.6 (Plant Science)	50.0 (General Agriculture)
Mathematics (N=640)	68.3	71.5 (Statistics)	67.2 (Mathematics)
Health Sciences (N=762)	67.5	84.0 (Basic Med. Sci.)	46.4 (Gerontology)
Home Economics (N=142)	63.4	a	a
Social Sciences (N=2580)	62.9	83.0 (Economics)	18.1 (Business & Management)
Engineering (N=1052)	58.3	70.3 (Mineral Engr.)	50.9 (General Engineering)
Education (N=2981)	52.6	66.2 (Educ. Psych.)	47.7 (Elementary Education)
Fine/Applied Arts (N=761)	52.0	57.3 (Music)	46.6 (Fine Arts)

[a]No subfields.

Table 3

Percentage of Programs That Either Required or Recommended a GRE Subject Test in 1981, by Discipline

Discipline	Mean	Range	
		High	Low
Physical Sciences (N=990)	59.9	71.9 (Biochemistry)	25.0 (General Science & Technology)
Biological Sciences (N=1287)	58.3	78.0 (Zoology)	21.0 (Environmental Studies)
Mathematics (N=640)	39.8	44.9 (Statistics)	32.8 (Computer & Information Science)
Humanities (N=1654)	36.8	60.7 (Romance Languages)	8.8 (Religion)
Engineering (N=1052)	35.6	48.2 (Other Engr.)	30.4 (Industrial & Management Engr.)
Agriculture (N=335)	28.4	33.9 (Animal Science)	5.6 (General Agriculture)
Social Sciences (N=2580)	24.9	48.6 (Economics)	2.2 (Social Work)
Health Sciences (N=762)	19.5	59.1 (Basic Medical Sci.)	0.0 (Gerontology)
Fine/Applied Arts (N=761)	16.7	32.5 (Music)	5.6 (Fine Arts)
Education (N=2981)	14.5	23.6 (Educ. Psych.)	9.7 (Physical Educ. & Recreation)
Home Economics (N=142)	12.6	a	a

[a]No subfields.

Table 4

Percentage of Doctoral Programs That Required or Recommended the GRE General Test in 1981, by Reputational Quality Rating[a]

Rating	All Doctoral Programs (N=5491)	Biological Sciences (N=742)	Humanities (N=719)	Physical Sciences (N=618)	Engineering (N=686)	Social Sciences (N=882)
Distinguished	88	100	90	94	64	94
Strong	84	88	87	73	81	91
Good	84	92	80	80	70	96
Adequate	83	96	91	82	56	92
Marginal	73	87	81	85	60	73

[a]Reputational quality ratings taken from Roose & Andersen (1970). Ratings data were not available for 6 of the 11 fields included in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 5

Percentage of Graduate Programs That Required or Recommended GRE Scores in 1972 and 1981, by Highest Degree and Discipline

Program	General			Subject		
	1972	1981	Change	1972	1981	Change
Highest Degree:						
Master's	62.1	56.2	-5.9	31.0	21.1	-9.9
Doctorate	67.6	75.4	+7.8	46.9	44.4	-2.5
Discipline:						
Agriculture	54.1	68.3	+14.2	26.6	28.4	+1.8
Biological Sciences	70.1	81.8	+11.7	48.5	58.3	+9.8
Health Sciences	a	67.5	--	a	19.5	--
Home Economics	a	63.4	--	a	12.6	--
Fine/Applied Arts	54.8	52.0	-2.8	20.2	16.7	-3.5
Humanities	63.5	70.0	+6.5	38.8	36.8	-2.0
Physical Sciences	68.4	78.5	+10.1	55.5	59.9	+4.4
Mathematics	62.0	68.3	+6.3	44.6	39.8	-4.8
Engineering	51.5	58.3	+6.8	38.5	35.6	-2.9
Social Sciences	72.3	62.9	-9.4	41.3	24.9	-16.4
Education	57.2	52.6	-4.6	19.0	14.5	-4.5
Total	64.5	64.1	-0.4	38.7	30.7	-8.0

[a]Not listed as major field area in 1972 Graduate Programs and Admissions Manual.

Table 6

Sample Returning Completed Questionnaires

Master's Programs	Number Responding	
Size:	Small	Large
GRE Required for All	25	31
Recommended for All	8	10
Required or Recommended for Some	7	12
Neither Required Nor Recommended	23	20
Doctoral Programs		
GRE Required for All	50	45
Recommended for All	18	12
Required or Recommended for some	12	15
Neither Required Nor Recommended	19	18

Note. Total number of usable questionnaires was 333. Number shown in above table is 325 because some respondents omitted information on their GRE policy or highest degree.

Table 7

Responses to Mailing by Discipline

Discipline	Returned and Used	Claimed Returned; Not Received	Requested Replacement; Not Received	Refused to Participate	Ignored Followup	Total Number Mailed
Chemistry	52%	10%	2%	5%	31%	84
Economics	48%	3%	8%	10%	31%	67
English	63%	4%	6%	3%	25%	73
Mathematics	48%	5%	5%	10%	33%	83
Computer Science	57%	5%	12%	3%	23%	74
Music	54%	6%	8%	5%	27%	79
Psychology	50%	8%	8%	3%	31%	72
Education	60%	8%	1%	2%	29%	84
Total	54%	6%	6%	5%	29%	
N:	333	39	37	31	176	616

Table 8

Mean Importance Ratings for Each Admission Criterion

for Departments Requiring GRE and Those Neither Requiring Nor Recommending GRE

Mean Importance Ratings: Req'd for All (n=151)	Not Req'd (n=80)	Admission Criteria (listed in Item 5a. through 5u).
3.9	3.8	c. Undergraduate grade-point average in major field
3.8	3.1	g. Recommendation letters from faculty known by members of your department
3.7	3.6	b. Undergraduate grade-point average in junior and senior years
3.6	1.4	j. GRE General (Aptitude) Test verbal score
3.6	1.4	k. GRE General (Aptitude) Test quantitative score
3.6	3.6	e. Undergraduate major related to intended field of graduate study
3.5	3.3	d. Undergraduate grade-point average overall
3.0	2.8	i. Educational or career aspirations of applicant
3.0	2.7	f. Recommendation letters from faculty not known by members of your department
3.0	2.6	q. Applicant known by your faculty
2.9	2.8	r. Other academic achievements (papers, projects)
2.9	2.6	a. Quality of undergraduate institution
2.7	2.5	t. Personal statement on application form
2.7	2.3	s. Impression made in personal interview
2.6	2.4	u. Work experience
2.6	1.3	l. GRE General (Aptitude) Test analytical score
2.5	2.1	h. Other nonfaculty recommendations
2.5	1.6	m. GRE Subject (Advanced) Test score most appropriate to your program
1.9	1.9	p. Other test scores
1.9	1.4	n. GRE Subject (Advanced) Test score most appropriate to the applicant's undergraduate major
1.6	1.4	o. Particular subscores on the appropriate GRE Subject (Advanced) Test

Note. Criteria rated on scale from 1 (not used) to 5 (extremely important).

Table 9

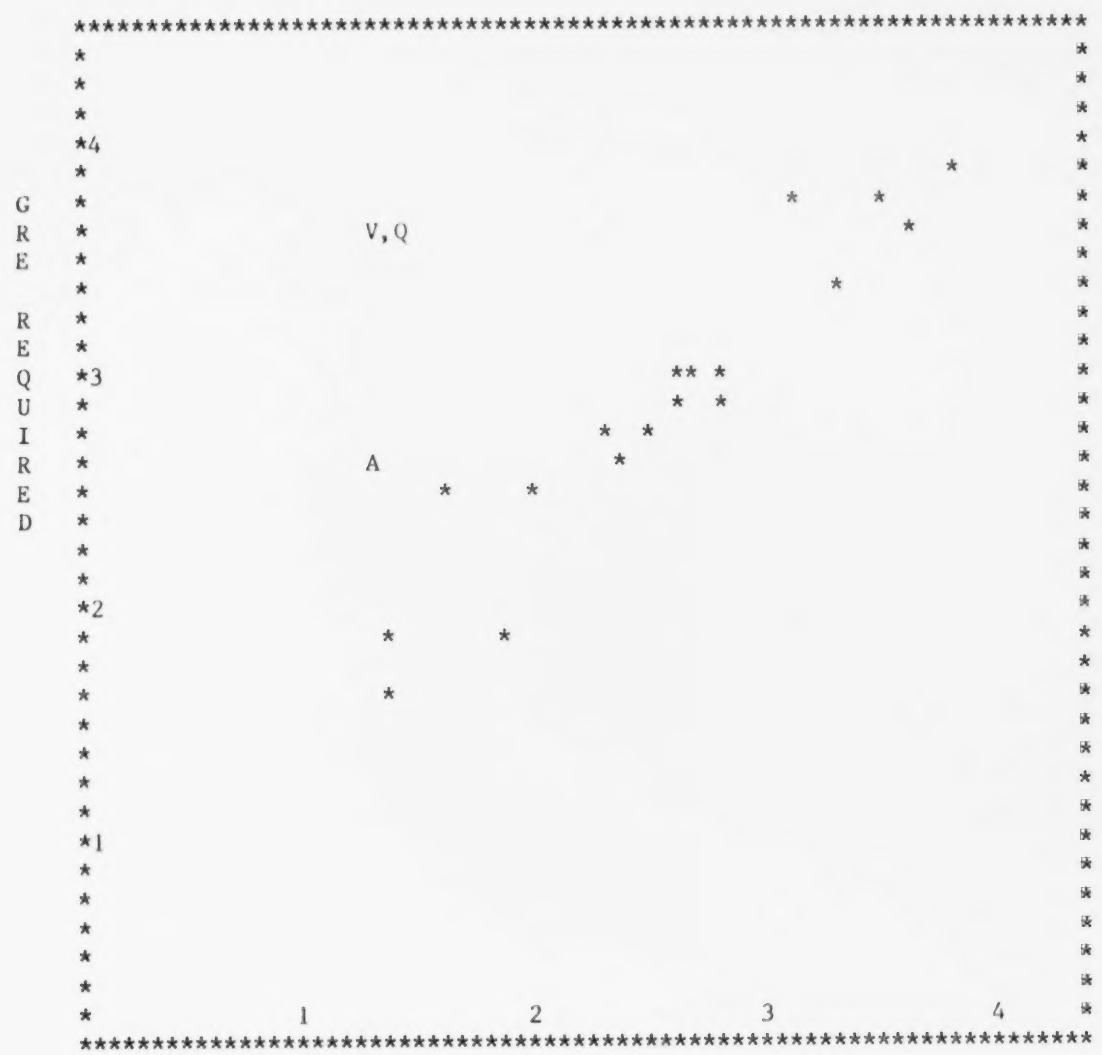
Ways of Using GRE Scores in Admission Decisions

(Listed in Order of Percentage Endorsement, Requiring Departments)

Policy on GRE Requirement		
Required	Recommended or Required or Recommended for Some Applicants	How GRE Scores Used
29%	46%	When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate.
27%	10%	Minimum cutoff scores are used, and applicants scoring below a specified score are not admitted.
17%	20%	GRE scores are used in different ways for different applicants in a process that is intuitive and "clinical" in nature.
14%	10%	GRE scores are used to categorize applicants (e.g., "probable," "possible," "unlikely") before examining other information.
6%	12%	GRE scores are used for purposes other than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves.
5%	0%	Points are assigned to each applicant's test scores and other credentials on a rational, not statistical, basis. The points are summed, and the applicants with the highest sums are offered admission.
1%	2%	Prediction formulas, based on test scores and other credentials of previous applicant groups, are used for selecting among new applicants for admission.
99%	100%	Totals

Figure 1

Importance Ratings: Departments Requiring GRE Versus Those Neither Requiring Nor Recommending GRE



Appendix A

GRE GRADUATE RECORD EXAMINATIONS

GRADUATE ADMISSIONS PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE

To the Respondent:

To help improve our understanding of the graduate admissions process and the role of the Graduate Record Examinations in that process, we hope you will take a few minutes to answer this questionnaire.

If you have one general admission procedure that applies throughout your department, please describe that procedure in completing the questionnaire. If you have different admission procedures for different programs within the department, you may choose one program and describe the procedure used for that particular specialty area.

The Graduate Record Examinations Board is sponsoring this nationwide survey as part of its continuing effort to gather and report important information about the graduate education community. The results of the survey will not identify individual institutions or departments, but will provide summaries of practices by disciplines. The final report will be made available through the GRE Board Research Report series.

Thank you for your cooperation.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire or the study, please contact:

Philip K. Oltman, Ph.D.
Project Director
Division of Measurement Research and Services, 16-R
Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey 08541

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GRE

Your Name_____

Institution _____

Department _____

Faculty Rank: (Check one)

1 Full Professor

2 Associate Professor

3 Assistant Professor

4 Other

1. Does your department use the same admissions procedure for all applicants or different procedures for one or more specialty areas? (Check one)

1 Same procedure for all applicants

2 Separate procedures for specialty areas

2

2. Check one of the alternatives below to indicate whether this questionnaire is being completed with reference to:

1 A common departmental admissions procedure

2 A procedure for a specialty area within the department

(Identify specialty _____)

Note: For the remainder of this questionnaire, answer each question with reference to the alternative selected in Question 2 (either a common departmental procedure or the procedure used in a particular specialty).

3. Check the highest degree offered by the department or program whose procedure you are describing.

1 Master's

2 Doctorate

3 Other (Specify _____)

4. Check the one statement that best describes your admissions policy for degree candidates in the department or program you are describing.

1 Essentially "open door"

2 Somewhat competitive (usual standards for undergraduate grades and test scores waived in some cases)

3 Moderately competitive; strong credentials required

4 Very competitive; some strong candidates rejected

5 Extremely competitive; only exceptional candidates accepted

GRE

5. Rate the criteria below in terms of their general **importance for decisions about admission** to your department or specialty program. (Circle one number for each statement.)

	Not used	Not very important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
a. Quality of undergraduate institution	1	2	3	4	5
b. Undergraduate grade-point average in junior and senior years	1	2	3	4	5
c. Undergraduate grade-point average in major field	1	2	3	4	5
d. Undergraduate grade-point average overall	1	2	3	4	5
e. Undergraduate major related to intended field of graduate study	1	2	3	4	5
f. Recommendation letters from faculty **not known** by members of your department	1	2	3	4	5
g. Recommendation letters from faculty **known** by members of your department	1	2	3	4	5
h. Other **nonfaculty** recommendations	1	2	3	4	5
i. Educational or career aspirations of applicant	1	2	3	4	5
j. GRE General (Aptitude) Test verbal score	1	2	3	4	5
k. GRE General (Aptitude) Test quantitative score	1	2	3	4	5
l. GRE General (Aptitude) Test analytical score	1	2	3	4	5
m. GRE Subject (Advanced) Test score most appropriate to **your program**	1	2	3	4	5
n. GRE Subject (Advanced) Test score most appropriate to the applicant's undergraduate major	1	2	3	4	5
o. Particular **subscores** on the appropriate GRE Subject (Advanced) Test	1	2	3	4	5
p. Other test scores (Specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5
q. Applicant known by your faculty	1	2	3	4	5
r. Other academic achievements (papers, projects)	1	2	3	4	5
s. Impression made in personal interview	1	2	3	4	5
t. Personal statement on application form	1	2	3	4	5
u. Work experience	1	2	3	4	5

v. Other criteria (Specify) _____

_____

_____

3

GRE

6. Check the box beside any subgroup listed below if the relative importance of the criteria listed in Question 5 is different for that group. (If you check any box, explain briefly below.)

Foreign applicants

Ethnic minorities

Older applicants

Women

Handicapped applicants

7. Check the one statement that most closely approximates the policy of the program or department regarding GRE **General** (**Aptitude**) Test scores.

4

1 Required for all degree applicants

2 Recommended for all degree applicants

3 Required or recommended for **some** degree applicants

4 Not required or recommended for any degree applicants

8. Check the one statement that most closely approximates the policy of the department or program regarding GRE **Subject** (**Advanced**) Test scores.

1 Required for all degree applicants

2 Recommended for all degree applicants

3 Required or recommended for **some** degree applicants

4 Not required or recommended for any degree applicants

9. Does the department, program, or institution have a formal policy regarding admission decisions for **handicapped** students?

1 Yes

2 No

If yes, explain and/or include a copy of the policy statement.

GRE

10. If the department or program does not require or recommend either GRE General (Aptitude) or Subject (Advanced) Test scores, **skip to Question 16.** If either GRE General (Aptitude) or Subject (Advanced) Test scores are required or recommended for **some but not all** applicants, please explain the conditions under which these scores are or are not required or recommended.

5

11. If the admissions committee receives GRE scores for a **handicapped** applicant with a statement indicating that the test was administered **under special conditions** due to the handicap, are those scores interpreted differently?

1 Yes (Explain below)

2 No

GRE

12. Check the box beside the one statement below that most closely approximates the way the department or program uses GRE scores in admissions decisions.

1 GRE scores are used for purposes **other** than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves.

2 Minimum cutoff scores are used, and applicants scoring below a specified score are not admitted.

3 GRE scores are used to categorize applicants (e.g., "probable," "possible," "unlikely") before examining other information.

4 When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate.

5 Prediction formulas, based on test scores and other credentials of previous applicant groups, are used for selecting among new applicants for admission.

6 Points are assigned to each applicant's test scores and other credentials on a rational, not statistical, basis. The points are summed, and the applicants with the highest sums are offered admission.

6

7 GRE scores are used in different ways for different applicants in a process that is intuitive and "clinical" in nature.

Comments _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

13. The phrases below describe ways that a department or program might use GRE test scores for purposes **other than** admissions. Check as many as apply to your department or program.

	GRE General (Aptitude) Test	GRE Subject (Advanced) Test
Academic advising		
Awarding assistantships and fellowships		
Placement of students in review courses		
As comprehensive examinations or some other requirement for graduation		

Other (Specify) _____

_____

_____

GRE

14. The Graduate Record Examinations Board has established guidelines for the use of GRE scores. How does the department or program use these guidelines? (Check one statement.)

1 We do not use the guidelines.

2 We are familiar with the guidelines, but do not incorporate them into our admissions practices.

3 The guidelines are followed in our admissions practices.

15. If you would be willing to participate in a brief telephone interview concerning your admissons practices, please enter your telephone number at right. ☐☐☐-☐☐☐-☐☐☐☐ extension ☐☐☐☐

16. The following question should be answered by respondents whose department or program does **not** require or recommend GRE test scores for admission.

How important is each of the listed reasons for your **not** requiring or recommending GRE test scores for admission? (Circle one number for each reason.)

	Unimportant	Moderately important	Very important
a. GRE test scores do not predict performance in our program	1	2	3
b. GRE tests pose special difficulties for the handicapped	1	2	3
c. GRE test scores do not predict equally well for certain subgroups (e.g., minorities, women)	1	2	3
d. GRE test scores are not necessary; the other information we obtain is sufficient to make accurate decisions	1	2	3
e. We have an open door policy	1	2	3
f. The GRE tests seem to penalize the better, more creative students in our discipline	1	2	3
g. The content of the Subject (Advanced) Test is inappropriate for our discipline	1	2	3
h. Requiring or recommending GRE scores would simply add more paperwork to an already complicated process	1	2	3

i. Other reasons, if any: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

7

Thank you for your help. Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed preaddressed envelope.

Appendix B

Question 12, Comments On Reported Policy on Use of GRE Scores in Admissions

[Recorded verbatim and sorted by GRE General Test Score requirement (from Question 7) and by stated policy for use of GRE scores (from Question 12).

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores; they did not respond to any of the alternatives in Question 12:

> GRE scores are integral parts of application, and selection process is intuitive rather than quantitative.
>
> Option 2 is, I think, the closest but not entirely the case. And this is an area we are having some real concern with right now. We say we require 900+ GRE Verbal + Quantitative. We hold strictly to the presentation of scores but not to our "cutoff." Very frequently, a program area will request to admit a student with less than that minimum, presenting other evidence (grades, accomplishments, current position, and so forth). So many students are admitted with less than minimum scores that some of us are concerned that the requirement for this minimum, which seems pretty low to begin with, is serving no good purpose. But we don't know what to do. We have surveyed, informally, many other comparable universities for what they do and have not found any easy answers.
>
> None above applies. Taking the GRE is a graduate school requirement, but no cutoff has been set for M.A. students. Doctoral students must score 800 on combined V and Q.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 1 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used for purposes other than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves."

> The university has minumum scores which are automatically rejected. All others are accepted to the graduate school and referred to the department for acceptance in the program.
>
> The applicant must have the scores (Aptitude) but the results are rarely used.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 2 on Question 12: "Minimum cutoff scores are used, and applicants scoring below a specified score are not admitted."

For unconditional admission to our M.A. program, a student is required to have scored a total equal to or exceeding 1150 on the verbal and quantitative sections of the GRE General Examination. Few exceptions have been made to this qualification and then only if the student has scored close to the 1150 minimum total. Perhaps two students have been admitted to our M.A. program under these circumstances during the past 8-10 years (out of approximately 35-40 students admitted).

We have a minimum cutoff on General SAT [sic] of 1000. An occasional exception is made when an applicant is considered under alternative criteria and presents strong evidence of potential to do graduate study and research.

Combined V and Q of 1200 with minimum of 500 in each required for admission. Applicants between 1060 and 1199 can be admitted by action of Graduate Advisory Committee.

Combined GRE scores of 1150 for Verbal, Analytical, and Quantitative minimum for admission to our M.S. program. GRE score of 1250 minimum score for consideration of a teaching assistantship.

We are allowed a 10 percent variance on the minimum score requirement.

Minimum cutoff depends somewhat on graduate point average.

Essentially 2 is the policy with exceptions made for minorities, and so on.

The graduate school uses a uniform cutoff. The department uses the GRE to help evaluate applicants with less undergraduate work in the field.

Interviews are held for all who meet cutoff scores.

Number 6 is also true, but GRE scores are more important as a cutoff than in the sense of 6.

2, unless extenuating circumstances.

We really use GRE's, grade-point averages, and recommendations together with relatively equal weight.

Some exceptions are made if undergraduate academic record or other evidence warrants.

If other factors (such as grades and letters) are considerably better than test scores, these are sometimes given priority.

Waiver of GRE close to minimum is possible if student's other application materials (especially high overall GPA) are quite strong.

In addition to item 2, we also use procedures listed under items 6 and 7.

Our minimums are fairly low, however--then we use other criteria.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 3 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used to categorize applicants (e.g., 'probable,' 'possible, 'unlikely') before examining other information."

Categories also include: fellowship candidate vs. simply admission.

GRE scores are used as cutoff for consideration for our plushest Woodruff scholarships. (These are administered by a faculty committee on which are scientists who have more faith in numbers than we do.)

GRE scores can serve as the basis for rejection if other criteria are not consistently high.

3, and to some degree, 7.

We tend to look at GRE scores first. Very low scores--less than 1000 total on verbal + quantitative--tend 90 percent of the time to eliminate a candidate. High scores--1400 total--makes admission very likely. But we do examine other information.

GRE scores are important in fellowship nominations because fellowships are awarded by the Graduate School and not by the department. Our nominees are in competition with applicants from other disciplines. The GRE scores constitute the only consistent basis of comparison.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 4 on Question 12: "When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate."

Not unimportant, but less important.

The university requires GRE scores for admission, but these scores are rarely used in our division.

GRE (Advanced) test scores are being used in a manner that is similar to 2 above. 4 applies to GRE aptitude test.

Relatively unimportant would be more nearly correct. Scores always part of our consideration.

If GRE verbal is low, student is asked to retake GRE; if scores are still low yet undergraduate credentials and department tests are OK, student may take 10 semester hours on probationary basis.

Applicants with low scores are unlikely to be accepted even with strong credentials.

Applicants whose Aptitude tests total below 900 (verbal + math) are generally not admitted.

GRE scores are more important for financial aid decisions, but still are one of three major criteria, along with grades and recommendations, for admission.

Although we are a fairly quantitative field (computer science) we have found through the years that verbal aptitude is a more likely predictor of success than quantitative aptitude. Achievement tests have not be a very good predictor for us.

No department requiring GRE General Test scores endorsed Option 5 on Question 12, which dealt with prediction formulas.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 6 on Question 12: "Points are assigned to each applicant's test scores and other credentials on a rational, not statistical, basis. The points are summed, and the applicants with the highest sums are offered admission."

We are actually a combination of 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7. Only 1 and 4 are really inapplicable to our process.

The formal procedure is "clinical" but committee members' behavior has converged on an approximation of 6.

We do both 2 and 6 above. We use 500 as a cutoff and for applicants for financial aid (Teaching Assistantships), we figure the GRE score into a point total that incorporates GPA, letters, writing samples, and GRE.

The following comments were from departments requiring GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 7 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used in different ways for different applicants in a process that is intuitive and 'clinical' in nature."

> We have both minimum standards (2) and as in 7 do apply, on occasion, "intuitive, clinical" analysis.
>
> Point 4 would also apply except that an otherwise strong candidate might not be admitted if the GRE scores are quite weak.
>
> A very high or very low GRE score carries, respectively, a great deal of positive or negative weight. Any other score tends to carry little weight by itself and the other criteria become very important.
>
> Students whose GRE (V,Q) are below 1,000 may go through an appeals process. Credentials, personal interview, documents all are important in this instance.
>
> We have a cutoff but students may be waived in, especially foreign students who have done poorly on the verbal portion.
>
> None of the above fit. There are obviously some scores so low that we won't take the candidate with those scores. We tend to form an impression using scores and info of diverse types.
>
> In general, GRE scores--except for foreign students--are used ritualistically rather than for screening.
>
> Actually, 3, 4, and 7 all apply.
>
> While some "compensation" across criteria is possible, it would not be correct to call test scores "unimportant" at any time. Very low GRE with "rave" letters is suspicious. Letters must speak to reason for low GRE (or low grades for that matter).

The following comment is from a department recommending GRE General Test scores but not endorsing any of the alternatives in Question 12.

> We do not use the scores.

The following comment is from a department recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 1 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used for purposes other than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves."

> GRE scores on Advanced Test required for admission to candidacy but not required for admission.

There were no departments recommending GRE General Test scores that endorsed Option 2 ("minimum cutoff") or Option 3 ("categorize applicants") on Question 12.

The following comments were from departments recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 4 on Question 12: "When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate."

> We have not found test scores to necessarily identify successful students.
>
> Not that test scores are "unimportant," but we may minimize their importance and admit the student under "provisional" status. The scores are "sufficient" but not always "necessary" to admit a student.
>
> GRE scores are essential for foreign applicants. They are likewise important for applicants from less well-known institutions.
>
> GRE's particularly recommended for foreign students and students from unknown universities or universities with questionable standards.

There were no departments recommending GRE General Test scores that endorsed Option 5 ("prediction formulas") or Option 6 ("points assigned") on Question 12.

The following comments were from departments recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 7 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used in different ways for different applicants in a process that is intuitive and 'clinical' in nature."

> Unfortunately, in many cases decisions have to be made before GRE scores are available.
>
> GRE or MAT used for admissions decisions.
>
> For foreign applicants, the verbal score, and, to a lesser degree, the analytical scores, provide little information. With the number (about 200) of our foreign applicants two or three times that of domestic students, I would appreciate GRE scores designed for foreign students that would test a functional knowledge of English and the ability to answer analytical questions written with the use of a basic English vocabulary. This could be used to compare foreign students with each other.

The following comment was from a department requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants but not endorsing any of the alternatives on Question 12.

> Recommended for "weak" students.

The following comments were from departments requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants and endorsing Option 1 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used for purposes other than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves."

> M.A. and M.Ed. students must complete either the GRE General Aptitude or MAT before completion of the degree (a college policy, not a departmental or program requirement). The GRE General Aptitude and Subject Test in Literature is recommended to students (usually M.A. candidates) who intend to pursue further graduate work, especially the Ph.D. in English.
>
> Except that scores are used for admission if GPA is less than 3.0.

The following comment was from a department requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants and endorsing Option 2 on Question 12: "Minimum cutoff scores are used, and applicants scoring below a specified score are not admitted."

> 2, but student can appeal to Graduate Committee for special consideration.

There were no departments requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants that endorsed Option 3 ("categorize applicants") on Question 12.

The following comments were from departments requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants and endorsing Option 4 on Question 12: "When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate."

> Minimum cutoff scores are applied to foreign applicants.
>
> Test scores are required if 1) undergraduate GPA is less than 2.6 on a 4-point scale or 2) undergraduate degree was granted by a nonaccredited institution or a university outside the U.S. or 3) B.A. precedes application date by more than 6 years unless GPA is 3.0 or above.
>
> GRE scores are use chiefly: 1) when deciding whether to accept a student who is marginal (in their academic record); 2) selecting graduate assistants, we will probably select the applicant with a higher GRE score, if their records are otherwise same.

The following comment was from a department requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants and endorsing Option 5 on Question 12: "Prediction formulas, based on test scores and other credentials of previous applicant groups, are used for selecting among new applicants for admission."

> Difficult question to answer. We see a verbal score above 70 percent as enhancing an application. One lower than 25 percent eliminates the candidate from consideration. Previous course work, grades, letters from those whose judgments we trust, and reputations of schools they come from all figure in our evaluations.

There were no departments requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores that endorsed Option 6 ("points assigned") on Question 12.

The following comment was from a department requiring or recommending GRE General Test scores for some applicants and endorsing Option 7 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used in different ways for different applicants in a process that is intuitive and 'clinical' in nature."

> GRE's are a factor only when they widely depart from the average. A very high score will help a student being considered for an award, or who has low grades. A very low score will give us pause.

The following comment was from a department neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores that did not endorse any of the alternatives in Question 12.

> We consider GRE scores along with the total package of credentials. Perhaps 4 is the most appropriate answer.

The following comment was from a department neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 1 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used for purposes other than admissions, but not for admissions decisions themselves."

> GRE scores in chemistry are used in making decisions about degree candidacy.

The following comments were from departments neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 2 on Question 12: "Minimum cutoff scores are used, and applicants scoring below a specified score are not admitted."

> Students with relatively low scores are considered separately and, if indications of likely success in graduate study are found in other materials submitted, these students are admitted.

> Occasionally, students are admitted on the basis of high grade-point averages but without having yet taken the GRE. Such students first take the GRE and surpass the cutoff score during the first year of graduate study.

> However, decisions and criteria can be appealed on the basis of contraindicating performance evidence.

The following comment was from a department neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 3 on Question 12: "GRE scores are used to categorize applicants (e.g., 'probable,' 'possible,' 'unlikely') before examining other information."

> Advanced music test is taken together with oral exam to determine acceptance, acceptance with qualifications, or rejection.

The following comment was from a department neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 4 on Question 12: "When the applicant's other credentials are strong, test scores are unimportant. For applicants with weaker credentials, the test scores are expected to compensate."

> Though we don't require, certainly strong scores offered by a student with otherwise weak credentials are important.

There were no departments neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores that endorsed Option 5 ("prediction formulas") or Option 7 ("intuitive process") on Question 12.

The following comment was from a department neither requiring nor recommending GRE General Test scores and endorsing Option 6 on Question 12: "Points are assigned to each applicant's test scores and other credentials on a rational, not statistical, basis. The points are summed, and the applicants with the highest sums are offered admission."

> The primary GRE test score used is the score on the Subject Test and this score is used to help award financial aid.

Appendix C

Question 16i responses:

Personally I would like to see the GRE used, as the TOEFL, for foreign applicants applying from abroad from institutions we do not know much about.

In the past, the applicant's musical potential as a performer was the most important criterion that determined admission. This may change in the future.

Our degree is really for teachers of English who are already certified and (usually) employed as secondary instructors in public or private schools.

GRE test scores are not a requirement for admission to the University School of Graduate Studies.

Our Graduate program is small. We require only a Bachelor's degree in music with a 2.5 grade point average.

The long time frame involved to registering for the GRE advance of the test date and the long wait for the score report has forced us to make decisions on other information, i.e., transcripts, recommendations, scores or tape recordings, and other supportive data specifying professional experience.

To amplify in the above: ability to do graduate level work and/or research in mathematics has little relationship to such test taking abilities as speed and ability to solve visual-spatial problems, etc.

One must agree with the premises of your questions (above) before one can answer in the terms you present. Consequently, we cannot answer e., f., and g. Perhaps that sort of inattention to logic is what makes the GRE a poor predictor of performance for us.

The GRE is a topic discussed at least once a year. In the next few months, I believe the advanced music will be used in the area of music history.

We are a new department and our policies are still developing. I would like to pursue the use of GRE scores since they would undoubtedly help our admissions process.

Graduate policy tends to be open. We feel our screening battery can be more helpful in planning an individual program. This battery plus the completion of 16 hours (A or B) determines if we will advance the person to candidacy.

Question 16i responses: (cont.)

Since many of our students have been out of college for a few years after using GRE Advanced math we found that they (scores) were much poorer than the students should have been. Have not tried them in computer science.

In the past--when taking the GRE was a University requirement--the Chemistry Department would receive scores as much as a year after the applicant entered our program. By then we had other criteria upon which to base judgments.

We do not want to "salivate on signal" to high scores--not having them given, we hope, a much rounder--and deeper--evaluation.

Many of our students make late decisions to continue in graduate school. Requiring the GRE--or any such test--for admission would unduly delay their applications and interfere with their chances of receiving assistantships.

I feel answers e. through h. are not appropriate to our program.

Our graduate school does not require the GRE. We as a department would not require it only for our program in music.

Either the Miller Analogies or the GRE is required.

We are currently considering the use of GRE in the near future.

To be honest, our MA program does not have sufficient numbers of applicants to warrant using the GRE.

We accept scores on other tests -- NTE and Miller's.

We have an 'open door' policy, essentially. We monitor our accepted students by their undergraduate record and performance in a core of courses including P-chem, Adv. Org, Anal. and Inorganic. Since our program is not full time, it is difficult to give exams like the GRE and have them be meaningful.

Our entrance examination is designed to point out specific deficiencies in the students' preparation which must be corrected during graduate study. We want to scrutinize these examinations personally and have them on file for reference.

If we do away with GRE, it probably will have to do with limited number of testing opportunities.

c. we have a significant percentage of foreign students.
d. our usual policy. Recently there has been a move to reconsider, possibly introducing GRE.
g. true for the world music applicants.